

# The Spread of Greek Culture

## Prepare to Read

### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn how King Philip of Macedonia came to power and how Alexander the Great built his empire.
2. Understand what role the conquests of Alexander the Great played in spreading Greek culture.

### Taking Notes

As you read, look for details about the spread of Greek culture. Copy the chart below, and use it to record your findings.

| The Spread of Greek Culture |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Alexander's Empire          | The Hellenistic Age |
| •                           | •                   |
| •                           | •                   |
| •                           | •                   |



### Target Reading Skill

#### Make Comparisons

Comparing two or more situations, people, or items enables you to see how they are alike. As you read this section, compare the ideas of Alexander the Great to those of his predecessors.

### Key Terms

- **barbarian** (bahr BEHR eeun) *n.* a person who belongs to a group that others consider wild, or uncivilized

- **assassinate** (uh SAS uh nayt) *v.* to murder for political reasons
- **Alexander the Great** (alig ZAN dur thuh grayt) *n.* king of Macedonia (356–323 B.C.); conquered Persia and Egypt and invaded India
- **Hellenistic** (hel uh NIS tik) *adj.* describing Greek history or culture after the death of Alexander the Great, including the three main kingdoms formed by the breakup of Alexander's empire



A sculpture of King Philip of Macedonia

**K**ing Philip of Macedonia (mas uh DOH nee uh) had not wasted the money he spent on Greek tutors for his son. Young Alexander was a fine and eager student. The boy wanted to learn as much as he could, especially about the ideas and deeds of the Greeks.

The kingdom of Macedonia lay just north of Greece. Alexander thought of himself as Greek and spoke the Greek language. However, people who lived to the south did not accept the Macedonians as Greeks. They thought the Macedonians were barbarians, or wild and uncivilized people.

Alexander's tutor was the Greek philosopher Aristotle (AIR uh STAHT ul). Aristotle taught the boy Greek literature, philosophy, and science. Aristotle also passed on his strong feelings that the Greeks were a superior people and, therefore, deserved to rule.

Alexander loved his tutor, but his role model was Achilles, the warrior hero of the *Iliad*. Alexander vowed to visit the site of ancient Troy and lay a wreath at the tomb of his hero.

## Philip Comes to Power

Like his predecessors, the other Macedonian rulers before him, Philip had Greek ancestors and thought of himself as Greek. Also like his predecessors, Philip had maintained ties to his Greek neighbors. When he was young, Philip had studied in Greece. His experience of studying there led to his hiring of Aristotle to tutor Alexander.

When Philip came to power, he dreamed of conquering the rich city-states of Greece. He would accomplish this by using diplomacy as well as military force.

Before King Philip seized power in 359 B.C., Macedonia was poor and divided. Philip united Macedonia and then formed alliances with many of the Greek city-states by threatening or bribing them. He built an army even stronger than Sparta's. With this army and his talent for waging war, Philip captured one Greek city-state after another.

Demosthenes (dih MAHS tuh neez), who was a master of elocution (eluh KYOO shun), or the art of public speaking, tried to warn his fellow Athenians of the danger to the north:

“He is always taking in more, everywhere casting his net round us, while we sit idle and do nothing. When, Athenians, will you take the necessary action? What are you waiting for?”

In 338 B.C., Athens and another city-state, Thebes (theebz), at last joined to try to stop Philip. However, they were unsuccessful. Philip gained control of all of Greece.

**✓ Reading Check** Why did King Philip think Greece would be easy to conquer?



### Make Comparisons

How were Philip's attitudes about Greece similar to those of his predecessors? What clue word helps you recognize the similarities?



In an effort to unite the people of his country and preserve Greek freedom, Demosthenes issued powerful speeches against King Philip of Macedonia. These speeches came to be known as Philipics. This term is still used today to describe strong appeals against someone or something.

## Alexander Builds an Empire

After he had conquered all of Greece, Philip then planned to attack Persia. But in 336 B.C., before he could carry out his plan, Philip was assassinated, or murdered for political reasons, by a rival. At just 20 years old, Alexander became king. He now had a chance to be as great as his hero Achilles.

**Alexander's Conquests** Although he was young, Alexander was already an experienced soldier. One of his first actions was to invade the Persian Empire. The empire was much weaker than it had been in the days when Persia had attempted to conquer Greece. However, it was still huge, stretching from Egypt to India. In 334 B.C., Alexander won his first battle in the vast empire. He then led his army through Asia Minor, where together they won battle after battle. He then led them on to Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon, the Persian capital. Alexander's forces crossed the Indus River into India, taking extensive territory wherever they fought.

Within 11 short years, the Macedonian king had conquered Persia, Egypt, and lands extending beyond the Indus River in the east. He had earned the right to be called Alexander the Great.

Wherever Alexander went, he established cities. Many of them he named after himself. Even today, there are numerous cities named Alexandria or Alexandroupolis (ah lek sahn DROO puh lis) throughout western Asia.



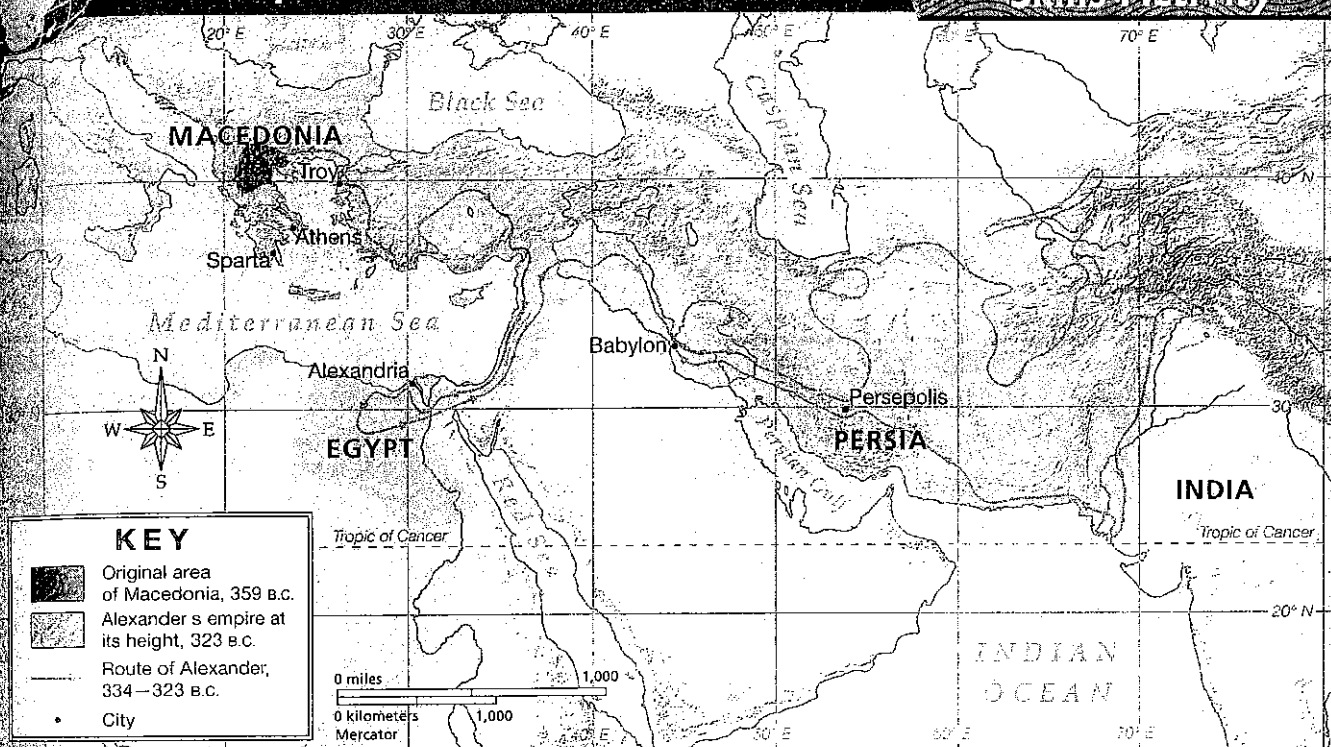
### Fighting the Persian Empire

The mosaic, at right, shows the Battle of Issus, in which Alexander the Great, above, defeated an army of Persians in 333 B.C. *Inter Why do you think Alexander is called "Alexander the Great?"*



## The Empire of Alexander the Great

## MAP MASTER Skills Activity



**Movement** By 323 B.C., Alexander controlled Greece as well as the territory once ruled by the Persians. **Identify** Use your finger to trace the route of Alexander from 334 to 323 B.C. Where did his journey begin and end? **Infer** How do you think geography affected the journey taken by Alexander and his troops?

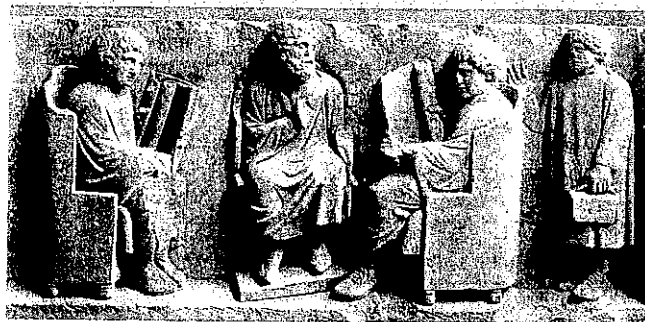
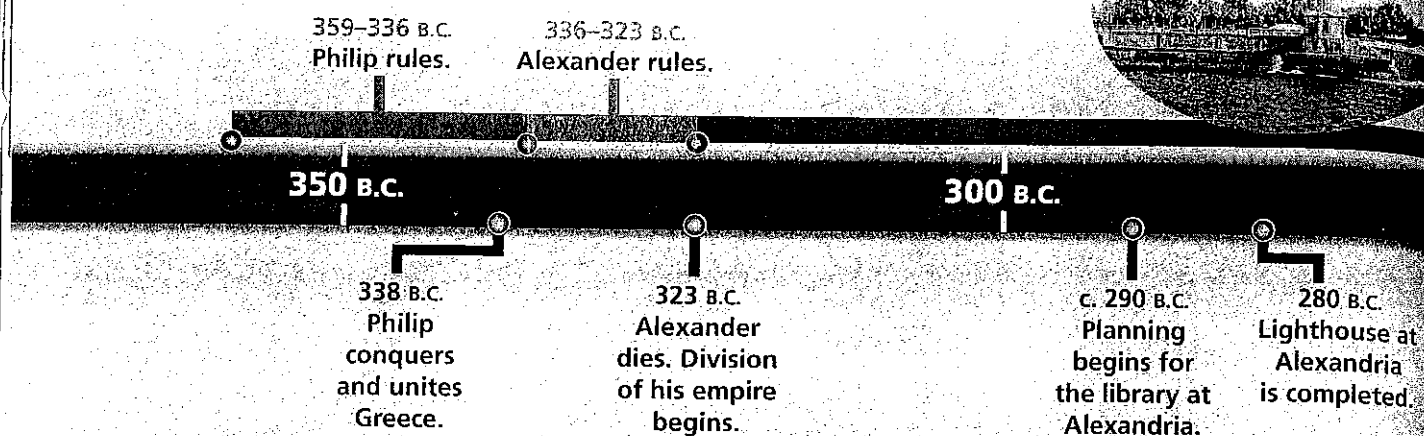
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**Alexander's Last Battle** Alexander's energy and military genius helped him succeed. This leader drove himself and his army hard, advancing across vast lands at lightning speed. His soldiers grumbled, but they obeyed him. He traveled far into the east, never losing a battle.

At last, not far beyond the Indus River, his weary troops refused to go another step east. Alexander was angry, but he turned back. Alexander got as far as Babylon (BAB uh lahn), where he came down with a fever. In 323 B.C., only 13 years after he had come to the throne, Alexander died. Like the legendary warrior Achilles, Alexander had died young. However, he had gone far beyond the deeds of his hero. His conquests spread Greek culture throughout a vast area.

**Reading Check** Why was Alexander so successful as a military leader?

## Ancient Greece, 359–146 B.C.



### Greek Culture Spreads

Alexander's death spelled death for his empire. After 50 years of confusion and disorder, the empire was split into three kingdoms, with each kingdom ruled by one of Alexander's former commanders. One commander ruled Greece and Macedonia, which were combined into one kingdom. The other two commanders ruled the kingdoms of Egypt and Persia. For the next three hundred years, the descendants of these commanders fought over the lands that Alexander had conquered.

As Alexander had done before them, his successors created new cities throughout the new kingdoms. Many Greek soldiers remained in the new kingdoms after Alexander's death and settled in those cities. Soon thousands of Greek traders and artisans followed. These emigrants, or people who leave their country to settle in another, ensured that Greek culture would remain alive and well in these Hellenistic kingdoms, as they came to be called. The word *Hellenistic* came from the Greek word *Hellas* and the word *Hellenistic* comes from the word *Hellas*—the name Greeks gave their land.



#### Use Context Clues

Look at the word

*Hellenistic* in this paragraph. If the word were not defined for you, what context clues would help you guess what it means?

323–146 B.C.  
Hellenistic Age



212 B.C.  
Archimedes  
dies.

200 B.C.

150 B.C.

146 B.C.  
Greece is  
conquered  
by Romans.

**The Hellenistic Kingdoms** When Alexander took control of lands, he tried not to destroy the cultures of the defeated people. Instead, he hoped that the local cultures would mix with Greek culture in his new cities. Unfortunately, this mixing did not happen in the three Hellenistic kingdoms.

The cities of the Hellenistic world were modeled after Greek cities. Greek kings ruled, and Greeks held the most important jobs. The cities were designed with Greek temples and agoras. Citizens gathered at large theaters for performances of Greek tragedies. The Greek language was spoken in the cities for hundreds of years, even though people in the countryside continued to speak their local languages.

**Greek Culture in Egypt** The greatest of all Hellenistic cities was Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander had founded this city in 332 B.C. at the edge of the Nile delta. Alexandria became the capital of Egypt. Over the years, it grew famous as a center for business and trade. Its double harbor was dominated by a huge lighthouse that rose about 350 feet (106 m) in the air. The tower was topped by a flame that guided ships safely into port.

The important Hellenistic cities were centers of learning, but Alexandria outdid them all. It boasted the largest library in the world, with half a million scrolls. It was the learning capital of the Greek world. Scholars and writers from all over came to use the huge library.

**✓ Reading Check** Why was Alexandria in Egypt such an important city?

### Timeline Skills

The Hellenistic Age began with the death of Alexander.

**Identify** How long did the Hellenistic Age last?

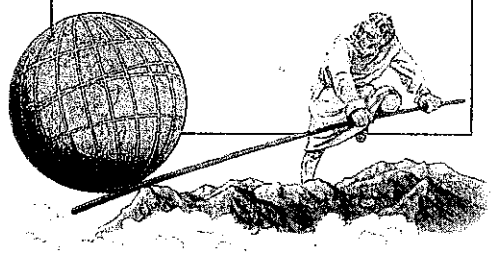
**Predict** Why do you think historians mark the end of the Hellenistic Age as 146 B.C.?



## Links to Science

**The Earth and the Sun** One scientist of the 200s B.C. rejected the idea that the Earth was the center of the universe.

Aristarchus (AIR uh STAHR kus) of Samos believed that the sun is at the center and that the Earth revolves around it. His idea did not catch on. Astronomers continued to base their work on an Earth-centered universe until the A.D. 1500s.



## Math and Science

Mathematics and science also flourished in Alexandria. Around 300 B.C., a mathematician named Euclid (YOO klid) developed the branch of mathematics called geometry. He started with accepted mathematical laws. Then, he wrote step-by-step proofs of mathematical principles. The proofs helped explain the qualities of such figures as squares, cubes, angles, triangles, and cones. Mathematicians today still use Euclid's system.

Unlike the people who lived at the time of Columbus, many scientists in Hellenistic times knew that the Earth was round. A scientist named Eratosthenes (ehr uh TAHS thuh neez) even calculated the distance around the Earth. His answer, 24,662,000 miles (39,679,000 km), was very close to the correct distance, which we now know is 24,900,000 miles (40,075,000 km).

Probably the greatest scientist of the times was Archimedes (ar kuh MEE deez). Archimedes studied in Alexandria. He discovered that people can use pulleys and levers to lift very heavy objects. One story says that he hoisted up a loaded ship with these devices. Once he boasted: "Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand on, and I will move the Earth."

✓ **Reading Check** How did scientists of Hellenistic times differ from scientists of Columbus's time in their thinking about the Earth?



## Section 3 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms listed at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.



### Target Reading Skill

What goals did Alexander and his father King Philip have in common?

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** Who was Alexander's tutor when he was young?

(b) **Identify Cause and Effect** How did Alexander's upbringing affect his attitudes about Greek culture?

(c) **Draw Conclusions** Alexander the Great wanted the cultures of his defeated cities to survive and mix with Greek culture. What happened instead? Why?

2. (a) **Describe** What features of Greek culture were carried over to the Hellenistic kingdoms?

(b) **Make Inferences** Name one way that the domination of Greek culture in the Hellenistic countries might have been an advantage. Name one way that it might have been a disadvantage.

(c) **Evaluate** Describe the importance of the contributions made by Euclid, Eratosthenes, and Archimedes.

### Writing Activity

What do you think of Alexander's education? Write a short paragraph that supports your opinion.

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